



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 474**

January Session, 2017

Substitute Senate Bill No. 903

*Senate, April 6, 2017*

The Committee on Public Health reported through SEN. GERRATANA of the 6th Dist. and SEN. SOMERS of the 18th Dist., Chairpersons of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 20-195aa of the general statutes is repealed and  
2 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2017*):

3 As used in [sections 20-195aa] this section and sections 20-195bb to  
4 20-195ee, inclusive:

5 (1) "Licensed professional counselor" or "professional counselor"  
6 means a person who has been licensed as a professional counselor  
7 pursuant to this chapter;

8 (2) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Public Health;

9 (3) "Department" means the Department of Public Health;

10 (4) "Professional counseling" means the application, by persons

11 trained in counseling, of established principles of psycho-social  
12 development and behavioral science to the evaluation, assessment,  
13 analysis, diagnosis and treatment of emotional, behavioral or  
14 interpersonal dysfunction or difficulties that interfere with mental  
15 health and human development. "Professional counseling" includes,  
16 but is not limited to, individual, group, marriage and family  
17 counseling, functional assessments for persons adjusting to a  
18 disability, appraisal, crisis intervention and consultation with  
19 individuals or groups; [.]

20 (5) "Under professional supervision" means the practice of  
21 professional counseling under the supervision of a licensed  
22 professional counselor, a physician licensed pursuant to chapter 370,  
23 who is certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and  
24 Neurology, an advanced practice registered nurse licensed pursuant to  
25 chapter 378, who is certified as an adult psychiatric and mental health  
26 clinical nurse specialist by the American Nurses Credentialing Center,  
27 a psychologist licensed pursuant to chapter 383, a marital and family  
28 therapist licensed pursuant to chapter 383a or a licensed clinical social  
29 worker licensed pursuant to chapter 383b; and

30 (6) "Direct professional supervision" means face-to-face consultation  
31 between one supervisor, who is a professional described in subdivision  
32 (5) of this section, and one person receiving supervision that consists of  
33 not less than a monthly review with a written evaluation and  
34 assessment by the supervisor of such person's practice of professional  
35 counseling.

36 Sec. 2. Section 20-195cc of the general statutes is repealed and the  
37 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2017*):

38 (a) The Commissioner of Public Health shall grant a license as a  
39 professional counselor to any applicant who furnishes evidence  
40 satisfactory to the commissioner that such applicant has met the  
41 requirements of section 20-195dd, as amended by this act. The  
42 commissioner shall develop and provide application forms. The  
43 application fee shall be three hundred fifteen dollars.

44 (b) Licenses issued under this section may be renewed annually  
45 pursuant to section 19a-88. The fee for such renewal shall be one  
46 hundred ninety-five dollars. Each licensed professional counselor  
47 applying for license renewal shall furnish evidence satisfactory to the  
48 commissioner of having participated in continuing education  
49 programs. The commissioner shall adopt regulations, in accordance  
50 with chapter 54, to (1) define basic requirements for continuing  
51 education programs [ , which] that shall include (A) not less than one  
52 contact hour of training or education each registration period on the  
53 topic of cultural competency, [and,] (B) on and after January 1, 2016,  
54 not less than two contact hours of training or education during the first  
55 renewal period in which continuing education is required and not less  
56 than once every six years thereafter on the topic of mental health  
57 conditions common to veterans and family members of veterans,  
58 including [(A)] (i) determining whether a patient is a veteran or family  
59 member of a veteran, [(B)] (ii) screening for conditions such as post-  
60 traumatic stress disorder, risk of suicide, depression and grief, and  
61 [(C)] (iii) suicide prevention training, and (C) on and after January 1,  
62 2018, not less than three contact hours of training or education each  
63 registration period on the topic of professional ethics, (2) delineate  
64 qualifying programs, (3) establish a system of control and reporting,  
65 and (4) provide for a waiver of the continuing education requirement  
66 for good cause.

67 Sec. 3. Section 20-195dd of the general statutes is repealed and the  
68 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2017*):

69 (a) (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this  
70 section, an applicant for a license as a professional counselor shall,  
71 prior to January 1, 2019, submit evidence satisfactory to the  
72 [Commissioner of Public Health] commissioner of having: [(1)] (A)  
73 Completed sixty graduate semester hours in or related to the discipline  
74 of counseling at a regionally accredited institution of higher education,  
75 [which] that included coursework in each of the following areas: [(A)]  
76 (i) Human growth and development, [(B)] (ii) social and cultural  
77 foundations, [(C)] (iii) counseling theories and techniques or helping

78 relationships, [(D)] (iv) group dynamics, [(E)] (v) processing and  
79 counseling, [(F)] (vi) career and lifestyle development, [(G)] (vii)  
80 appraisals or tests and measurements for individuals and groups, [(H)]  
81 (viii) research and evaluation, and [(I)] (ix) professional orientation to  
82 counseling; [(2)] (B) earned, from a regionally accredited institution of  
83 higher education a master's or doctoral degree in social work, marriage  
84 and family therapy, counseling, psychology or a related mental health  
85 field; [(3)] (C) acquired three thousand hours of postgraduate-degree-  
86 supervised experience in the practice of professional counseling,  
87 performed over a period of not less than one year, that included a  
88 minimum of one hundred hours of direct supervision by [(A)] (i) a  
89 physician licensed pursuant to chapter 370 who has obtained  
90 certification in psychiatry from the American Board of Psychiatry and  
91 Neurology, [(B)] (ii) a psychologist licensed pursuant to chapter 383,  
92 [(C)] (iii) an advanced practice registered nurse licensed pursuant to  
93 chapter 378 and certified as a clinical specialist in adult psychiatric and  
94 mental health nursing with the American Nurses Credentialing Center,  
95 [(D)] (iv) a marital and family therapist licensed pursuant to chapter  
96 383a, [(E)] (v) a clinical social worker licensed pursuant to chapter  
97 383b, [(F)] (vi) a professional counselor licensed, or prior to October 1,  
98 1998, eligible for licensure, pursuant to section 20-195cc, or [(G)] (vii) a  
99 physician certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry  
100 and Neurology, psychologist, advanced practice registered nurse  
101 certified as a clinical specialist in adult psychiatric and mental health  
102 nursing with the American Nurses Credentialing Center, marital and  
103 family therapist, clinical social worker or professional counselor  
104 licensed or certified as such or as a person entitled to perform similar  
105 services, under a different designation, in another state or jurisdiction  
106 whose requirements for practicing in such capacity are substantially  
107 similar to or higher than those of this state; and [(4)] (D) passed an  
108 examination prescribed by the commissioner. Any such applicant who,  
109 on or before July 1, 2017, is a matriculating student in good standing in  
110 a graduate degree program at a regionally accredited institution of  
111 higher education in one of the fields required under subparagraph (B)  
112 of this subdivision on or before July 1, 2017, but who cannot

113 reasonably complete the requirements set forth in this subdivision  
114 prior to January 1, 2019, as determined by the commissioner, may  
115 apply for a license under this subdivision on and after January 1, 2019.

116 (2) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this  
117 section, an applicant for a license as a professional counselor shall, on  
118 and after January 1, 2019, submit evidence satisfactory to the  
119 commissioner of having: (A) (i) Earned a graduate degree in clinical  
120 mental health counseling as part of a program of higher learning  
121 accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related  
122 Educational Programs, or a successor organization, or (ii) (I) completed  
123 at least sixty graduate semester hours in counseling at a regionally  
124 accredited institution of higher education that included coursework in  
125 each of the following areas: Human growth and development; social  
126 and cultural foundations; counseling theories; counseling techniques;  
127 group counseling; career counseling; appraisals or tests and  
128 measurements to individuals and groups; research and evaluation;  
129 professional orientation to mental health counseling; addiction and  
130 substance abuse counseling; trauma and crisis counseling; and  
131 diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, (II) earned  
132 from a regionally accredited institution of higher education a graduate  
133 degree in counseling, (III) completed a one-hundred-hour practicum in  
134 counseling, and (IV) completed a six-hundred-hour clinical mental  
135 health counseling internship; (B) acquired three thousand hours of  
136 postgraduate experience under professional supervision, including a  
137 minimum of one hundred hours of direct professional supervision, in  
138 the practice of professional counseling, performed over a period of not  
139 less than two years; and (C) passed an examination prescribed by the  
140 commissioner.

141 (b) An applicant for licensure by endorsement shall present  
142 evidence satisfactory to the commissioner that the applicant is licensed  
143 or certified as a professional counselor, or as a person entitled to  
144 perform similar services under a different designation, in another state  
145 or jurisdiction whose requirements for practicing in such capacity are  
146 substantially similar to or higher than those of this state and that there

147 are no disciplinary actions or unresolved complaints pending.

148 (c) An applicant who is [currently] licensed or certified as a  
149 professional counselor or its equivalent in another state, territory or  
150 commonwealth of the United States may substitute three years of  
151 licensed or certified work experience in the practice of professional  
152 counseling in lieu of the requirements of [subdivision (3)]  
153 subparagraph (C) of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section, or  
154 subparagraph (B) of subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section, as  
155 applicable, provided the commissioner finds that such experience is  
156 equal to or greater than the requirements of this state.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	20-195aa
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	20-195cc
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	20-195dd

**PH**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

---

***OFA Fiscal Note******State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None***Explanation***

This bill, which establishes new qualifications for professional counselor licensure, does not result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities. These changes are not anticipated to alter the number of individuals licensed by the Department of Public Health annually.

***The Out Years******State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 903*****AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill establishes new qualifications for professional counselor licensure, starting in 2019. For example, it requires applicants to have graduated from (1) a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) or (2) a regionally accredited program and meet other requirements similar to existing CACREP standards (e.g., a practicum and clinical internship of specified hours).

The bill also requires that (1) an applicant's postgraduate-degree experience occur over at least a two year period, rather than one year as under current law, and (2) the supervisor of that experience be licensed in Connecticut.

In some circumstances, the bill allows applicants who were enrolled in a graduate program on or before July 1, 2017 to apply for licensure under the current requirements when the new requirements take effect in 2019.

The bill also requires professional counselors' continuing education to include three contact hours in professional ethics annually.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2017

**§§ 1 & 3 — QUALIFICATIONS FOR LICENSURE**

The bill generally sets forth new qualifications for professional counselor licensure, starting on January 1, 2019. The current and new requirements are described in Table 1.



Table 1: Professional Counselor Licensure Qualifications

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Current Requirements</b>	<b>Requirements Under Bill (As of January 1, 2019)</b>
Graduate degree and coursework requirements	<p>Master's or doctoral degree in social work, marriage and family therapy, counseling, psychology, or a related mental health field, from a regionally accredited higher education institution</p> <p>60 graduate semester hours in counseling or a related field at such a regionally accredited institution, including coursework in all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human growth and development</li> <li>• social and cultural foundations</li> <li>• counseling theories and techniques or helping relationships</li> <li>• group dynamics</li> <li>• processing and counseling</li> <li>• career and lifestyle development appraisals or tests and measurements for individuals and groups</li> <li>• research and evaluation</li> <li>• professional orientation to counseling</li> </ul>	<p>Graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling from a program accredited by CACREP or a successor organization, or meet the following requirements:</p> <p>(1) Graduate degree in counseling from a regionally accredited higher education institution</p> <p>(2) 60 graduate semester hours in counseling at such a regionally accredited institution, including coursework in all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human growth and development</li> <li>• social and cultural foundations</li> <li>• counseling theories</li> <li>• counseling techniques</li> <li>• group counseling</li> <li>• career counseling</li> <li>• appraisals or tests and measurements to individuals and groups</li> <li>• research and evaluation</li> <li>• professional orientation to mental health counseling</li> <li>• addiction and substance abuse counseling</li> <li>• trauma and crisis counseling</li> <li>• diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders</li> </ul> <p>(3) 100-hour practicum in counseling, and</p> <p>(4) 600-hour clinical mental health counseling internship</p> <p>(For most specialty areas, CACREP requires 60 graduate semester hours. CACREP requires</p>

		programs to cover eight common core areas, many of which overlap with the topics above. CACREP also requires a 100-hour practicum and 600-hour internship)
Postgraduate-degree professional counseling experience	<p>3,000 hours of supervised experience over at least a one-year period</p> <p>Must include at least 100 hours of direct supervision by a professional counselor, psychiatrist, psychologist, APRN clinical specialist in adult psychiatric and mental health nursing, marital and family therapist, or clinical social worker</p> <p>The supervisor must be (1) licensed in Connecticut or (2) licensed or certified in another jurisdiction with requirements for practice substantially similar to, or higher than, those in Connecticut</p>	<p>3,000 hours of experience under professional supervision over at least a two-year period.</p> <p>Must include at least 100 hours of experience under “direct professional supervision” (see definition below under <i>Supervision Requirement</i>).</p> <p>Professional supervision must be from the same list of professionals as current law, except the supervisor must be licensed in Connecticut</p>
DPH-prescribed examination	Passage required	Passage required

As under current law, the bill allows applicants who are licensed or certified outside of Connecticut to substitute three years of such work experience for the bill’s requirements of post-degree supervised experience. The bill also continues to allow for licensure by endorsement under specified conditions.

### ***Supervision Requirement***

Under the bill’s new requirements, an applicant’s postgraduate-degree supervised professional counseling experience must include 100 hours of experience under “direct professional supervision.” The bill defines this term as face-to-face consultation between one supervisor and the individual, consisting of at least a monthly review with the supervisor’s written evaluation and assessment of the individual’s practice. The supervisor must be a state-licensed professional who is a professional counselor, psychiatrist,

psychologist, APRN clinical specialist in adult psychiatric and mental health nursing, marital and family therapist, or clinical social worker.

### ***Exception for Certain Applicants***

The bill's changes to licensure qualifications apply on and after January 1, 2019. But in certain circumstances, the bill allows an applicant to apply for licensure under the current requirements after that date. This is the case if the applicant:

1. on or before July 1, 2017, was a matriculating student in good standing in a graduate program at a regionally accredited higher education institution in one of the qualifying fields under current law, and
2. cannot reasonably complete the current requirements before January 1, 2019, as determined by the public health commissioner.

## **§ 2 — CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Existing law requires the public health commissioner to adopt regulations on professional counselors' continuing education, including certain mandatory topics. Under the bill, the regulations must require at least three contact hours on professional ethics each registration period, starting on January 1, 2018.

Existing regulations generally require professional counselors to complete 15 contact hours of continuing education during each annual registration period, starting with the second license renewal (Conn. Agency Regs., §§ 20-195cc-2 and -6).

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***CACREP Accreditation Standards***

CACREP accredits master's and doctoral programs in counseling and related specialties. The 2016 CACREP accreditation standards are comprised of six sections, including:

1. the learning environment,

2. professional counseling identity (including the curriculum and the eight core content areas),
3. professional practice (including practicum and internship requirements),
4. evaluation in the program,
5. entry-level specialty areas, and
6. doctoral standards for counselor education and supervision.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    26    Nay   0    (03/27/2017)